

REDUCING DEER DAMAGE TO YOUR GARDEN AND YARD



Background

In the early 1900's the white tailed deer population was no more than 500,000 across the country. Today the numbers are increasing and there are now close to 15 million individuals in the U.S. While it has been a great success story for the deer, this

increased population means an increase in human contact. For many homeowners, landscapers, gardeners and farmers these encounters often result in unsightly and costly damage to crops and decorative plants. This damage has especially become a problem in the northeastern states where prime deer habitat continues to grow with the development of suburban landscapes.

Feeding Habits

The best way to protect your plants is to first become familiar with the feed habits of deer. Deer are known to eat more than 500 different species of plants, but are generally selective. Deer will, however, expand their foraging selection when their usual food source becomes scarce. This usually occurs in the winter when snow cover reduces the availability of their natural foods. Under these circumstances, deer will browse even the most resistant plants rather than face starvation. Deer choose their forage based on its nutritional value and will very often prefer fertilized plants because of the increase in nutrients.

Management Options

There are many different types of management options, from store bought to home remedies, expensive fencing to inexpensive netting, a variety of creative solutions have been tried when it comes to dealing with this problem. Some of the most common deterrents today are least-preferred plants, spray on repellents (both homemade and store bought), fencing, scare tactics, and hunting. The following lists of questions below give important

points to consider when choosing a course of action. It is also important to know that deer are adaptable and learn quickly. Keeping these facts in mind is very useful when choosing the right deer manage-

Define your goals with the following questions:

- ã How much damage can be tolerated?
- ã How much money can be spent on control?
- ã How much damage is there?

Now analyze the site of the damage by asking yourself the following questions:

- ã Is relocation a possibility?
- ã Could a barrier going to be effective?
- ã Is it realistic to consider covering the preferred plants?

Finally talk to your friends, neighbors, or local farmers who may have experienced similar problems:

- ã What have they found works for them?



ment method.

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Methods of Management

Method	Description	When to use
Least-preferred plant	Deer can be deterred from gardens and landscaping by growing plants that they do not favor. (There is a list of these plants on the last 2 pages)	This is an inexpensive way to prevent significant damage to the beauty of your home, in harsh winters, however, these plants may be
Fencing	Fences may be electric or non-electric. An absolute barrier would have to be at least 8ft tall to keep deer out entirely, and the bottom would have to be close to the ground as deer prefer to crawl under rather	This method can be expensive and therefore is most reasonable for large crop areas where specific attention to individual plants is not a possibility. (A diagram may be
Physical Barriers (other than fencing)	Plants can be individually protected by using netting or plastic to cover over the tops where the deer tend to feed.	This is another inexpensive method to protect your plants. Somewhat unsightly, it is most practical for
Scare Tactics	Dogs, scarecrows, sprinklers, anything that would startle the deer and scare it off your property.	This method is most effective when combined with repellents or fencing.
Hunting	Archery, shotgun, or muzzle-loader may be permitted on your property.	In Rhode Island there is hunting allowed on private land in season with the appropriate licensing . Check the current hunting regulations for guidelines.
Repellents (store bought)	Repellents either have a bad taste or bad smell; the most effective products have both. They may come either ready-to-use or concentrated. Talk to friends, neighbors, farmers, and your local gardening store for suggestions.	Repellents can be used on a variety of plant life and come in many different forms and prices. For smaller gardens or seasonal gardens a weekly spray may be adequate, while for larger areas a seasonal
Repellents (homemade)	Through trial and error many farmers and gardeners have come up with homemade repellents that are both effective and affordable. Bars of soap with tallow fatty acid (coconut fatty acid is less effective), spray (recipe on next page), and human hair in a nylon sock.	Both the soap and the hair sachets were effective but only in a small radius making them suitable for small bushes and shrubs. The homemade spray worked like any other weekly spray and could safely be used on any number of

Homemade deer repellent spray:

Makes 1 quart

4 eggs

2 oz. red pepper sauce

2oz. chopped garlic

Blend ingredients together with enough water to make one quart. Blend thoroughly and strain.

1 quart is enough for 16 bushes for 1 week.

Soap Sachet:

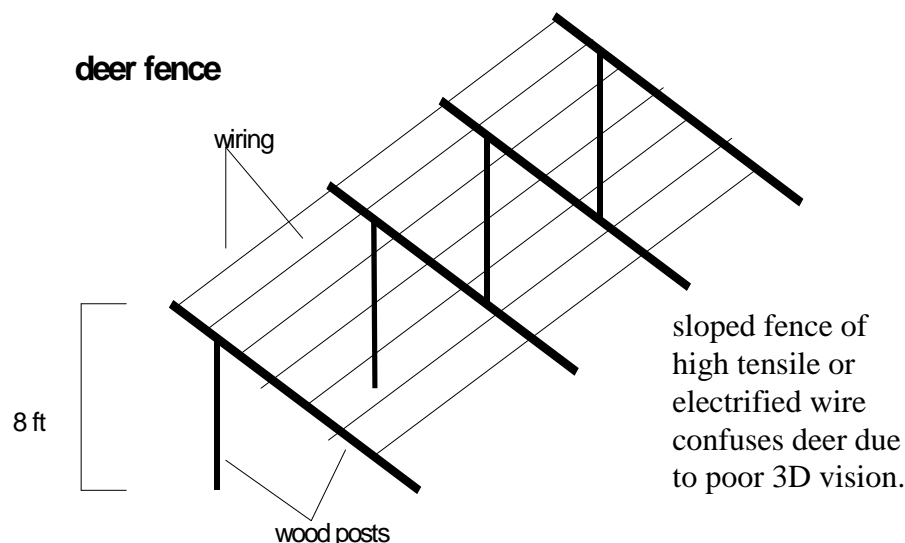
Place a bar of soap in a nylon sock or wrap in cheese cloth and hang from targeted bushes and shrubs.

Hair Sachet:

Place cut hair (get from a local barber) in a nylon sock or wrap in cheese cloth and hang from bushes, trees, etc.

Sprays: Homemade - vs - Commercial

Homemade	Commercial
Pro: Inexpensive and easy to make using everyday items.	Con: Sprays that need to be applied weekly can get costly to buy.
Con: Needs to be applied weekly, does not have any agent to make it stick to plants.	Pro: Sprays can be purchased that will last throughout a season.
Pro: No harmful chemicals, can be sprayed on food plants.	Con: Seasonal sprays are not as effective as weekly, need to spray on any new growth, after heavy rains needs to be resprayed.
Con: Needs to be reapplied after any rainfall, heavy or light.	Pro: Can be purchased ready-to-use, no mixing or making required.



Plants least-preferred by deer

* species native to RI

**species naturalized in RI

+species preferred by many birds for food or nesting

Trees

Common name

Chinese Dogwood
Colorado Blue Spruce
+ Cranberry Cotoneaster
** English Hawthorn
*+Flowering Dogwood
** Honey Locust
Kousa Dogwood
+ Mugo Pine
Norway Spruce
Sweet Gum or Red Gum
Smokebush/Smoketree

Latin name

Cornus kousa chinensis
Picea pungens
Cotoneaster apiculatus
Crataegus laevigata
Cornus florida
Gleditsia triacanthos
Cornus kousa
Pinus mugo
Picea abies
Liquidambar styraciflua
Cotinus coggygria

Shrubs

Common name

*+American Holly
** Barberry
Boxwood
Butterfly Bush
Drooping Leucothoe
Forsythia
Japanese Pieris
* Northern Bayberry or Candleberry
Redvein Enkianthus
Rose of Sharon
*+Sassafras, Common
*+Sassafras, White or Red
* Spiraea or Meadowsweet
* Sweet Pepper Bush
** Yucca

Latin name

Ilex opaca
Berberis vulgaris
Buxus sempervirens
Buddleia
Leucothoe fontanesiana
Forsythia spp.
Pieris japonica
Myrica pensylvanica
Enkianthus campanulatus
Hibiscus syriacus
Sassafras albidum
Sassafras albidum
Spiraea alba
Clethra alnifolia
Yucca filamentosa

Herbaceous

Common name

* Christmas Fern
* Lady Fern, Northern or Southern
Lush Pachysandra
* Ostrich Plume Fern

Latin name

Polystichum acrostichoides
Athyrium filix4emina
Pachysandra terminalis
Matteuccia struthiopteris

Red Fanal Astilbe

Astilbe arendsii

Flowers

Common name

Bee-balm, Oswego Tea
**Black-eyed Susan or Yellow Daisy
Bleeding Heart, Pink
Bleeding Heart, White
Blue Chip Campanula
* Butterfly Weed or Pleurisy Root
Caneflower, White
Carnation, Laced Romeo
Chantreyland Viola
Clara Curtis Daisy
Columbine, Garden or European
Columbine, Wild
Coreopsis, Moonbeam or Golden Showers
* Coreopsis, Rose or Pink Tickseed
Crocus
Daffodils
Dame's Rocket
Daylily
Dwarf Lilac
Forget-Me-Not
Geranium
Golden Sedum
Hollyhock, Watchman
Iris, Siberian
Jewel of Persia
Lavander
Liatris, Purple
Lily-of-the-Valley
Lemon Fluff
* Lupine, Wild
Magnolia, Royal Star
Oriental Poppy
Phlox
Primrose, Evening or Northern Sundrops
Primrose, Pink Missouri
Red Coral Bells
Red Sedum Creeper
Rose Campion or Mullein-Pink
Russian Sage
Scabiosa, Pink Mist
Sheep Fescue
* Showy Goldenrod
Snowmound Candytuft
Trumpet Vine
* Windflowers

Latin name

Monarda didyma
Rudbeckia hirta
Dicentra eximia
Dicentra spectabilis
Campanula carpatica
Asclepias tuberosa
Echinacea purpurea
Dianthus spp.
Viola cornuta
Dendranthema rubella
Aquilegia vulgaris
Aquilegia canadensis
Coreopsis verticillata
Coreopsis rosea
Crocus spp.
Narcissus pseudonarcissus
Hesperis matronalis
Hemerocallis spp.
Syringa patula
Myosotis alpestris
Geranium ibericum platypetalum
Sedum kamtschaticum
Alcea rosea
Iris sibirica
Nepeta faassenii
Lavandula
Liatris spicata
Convallaria majalis
Centaurea macrocephala
Lupinus perennis
Magnolia stellata
Papaver orientale
Phlox spp.
Oenothera tetragona
Oenothera speciosa
Heuchera sanguinea
Sedum spurium
Lychnis coronaria
Perovskia atriplicifolia
Scabiosa columbaria
Festuca ovina
Solidago speciosa
Iberis sempervirens
Campsis tagliabuana
Anemone quinquefolia